

Implementing a Simple and Cost-effective Library Bike Share Program

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How Does it Work?

- Keep it simple!
- Catalog and number each bike
- Establish the checkout period. We have a 24-hour checkout with one renewal.
- We put the barcode on a keychain for each bike
- Circulation desk checks out keys to bikes to patrons
- Checkout is free
- Lost or broken key= \$25
- Lost/irreparably damaged bike= \$250



Equipment Recommendations

- Focus should be on simplicity and reliability
- Single-speed cruiser bikes are ideal for their ease of operation, simple maintenance, and low cost
- Note that singlespeed bikes are not ideal for hilly areas
- Cost of about \$200 per bike
- Added quick release levers for easy adjustment of seat height
- Added safety leash to deter theft of seats
- Rust-proof chains are a cheap, worthwhile, upgrade
- Durable baskets and/or racks are worth considering
- Helmets can be made available for checkout, should be sanitized between uses
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic, disinfecting wipes for patrons to use when checking out a bicycle



Part of the Ames Library's bike share fleet

Maintenance Requirements

- Our singlespeed bikes require an average of about 1 hour of maintenance each per year
- Tire pressure needs to be checked regularly for safety and to prevent flats
- Fixing flat tires are the most common maintenance task
- Keeping chains lubed is important, but can be skipped if chains are upgraded to stainless or rust proof models
- Check all bolts at least once a year to maintain safety
- Involving students or local bicycle advocacy groups in maintenance reduces time commitment and costs
- If funds exist check with local bike shops to see what professional maintenance fees would be

Liability Concerns

- Bike share liability can be managed
- A carefully crafted waiver is only a starting point
- Keeping bicycles in proper working order helps manage liability
- Not charging for the service reduces liability
- Educating users reduces liability
- An additional insurance rider may be required
- Helmets should either be required or recommended to users
- Highly recommended: Liability Issues for Bike Share Programs by Public Health Law Center at William Mitchell College of Law
<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Liability%20and%20Bike%20Share%20Programs%2012.13.13.pdf>

Why?

- Consider alignment with library mission statement
- Much cheaper to implement and maintain than commercial bike share programs
- Equitable access to transportation can support diversity initiatives
- Bike shares are community health resources
- Environmental sustainability: reduction in carbon emissions



Bicycle Friendly University / Community

- Establishing a library-based bike share helped IWU achieve Silver level Bicycle Friendly University status from the League of American Bicyclists
- There are also awards for Bicycle Friendly Communities that would apply to public libraries



Library Bike Shares: Additional Resources

Biking Librarians Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bikinglibrarians/about>

Cox, Stefani. Why Bike Share Makes Sense as a Library Resource”

<http://betterbikeshare.org/2018/01/30/bike-share-makes-sense-library-resource/>

Fishman, Elliot. *Bike Share*, Routledge. 2020.

Hill, James “Book-a-Bike: Increasing Access to Physical Activity with a Library Card,” chapter In *Audio Recorders to Zucchini Seeds: Building a Library of Things*, Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited. 2017.

“Lorain Bike Share.” *Unabashed Librarian*, no. 192, July 2019, pp. 6–8.